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# **Facts**

## **for NORTHEAST COMMITTEEMEN**

*Issued by the Northeast Division*  
**Agricultural Adjustment Administration**  
U.S.D.A. Washington, D. C.

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

VOL. 1

February 1939

NO. 1

### **GREETINGS**

Here is the first issue of "Facts for Northeast Committeemen", a monthly publication which all AAA committeemen in the Northeast Region will receive. It is being issued at the suggestion of many committeemen, and its purpose is to make available in brief, direct form the information they are requesting. We shall welcome inquiries from any committeeman and will, insofar as possible, answer the questions in these monthly issues.

The purpose of this publication is to provide committeemen with the material they need in helping their fellow farmers better understand the AAA program.

A. W. Manchester, Director,  
Northeast Division, AAA.

### **MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN SOIL LOSSES**

The facts on soil erosion are pretty clear. Mostly within the past 100 years, 50 million once-fertile acres have been permanently ruined as productive land. Another 50 million once-fertile acres are seriously damaged. And in addition, there are now in cultivation 100 million acres impaired by erosion, and another 100 million acres on which erosion is well started. In dollars and cents this loss has been estimated at 400 million dollars per year.

The land permanently ruined and seriously damaged by erosion represents an area larger than all the farm land in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Iowa, and Oregon. (From: Soil-Conservation; Who Gains By It? DS-11, Extension Service, U.S.D.A.)

## THE 1939 CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Charles D. Lewis, Assistant Director,  
Northeast Division, AAA.

The purposes of the 1939 Agricultural Conservation Program remain the same as those of former years: to protect and restore the soil and farms of the country, and to help maintain farmer's incomes.

The program itself is much the same as that of 1938. Farmers who co-operate by carrying out on their farms those steps in good farming which are called soil-conserving or soil-building practices, and who help to prevent over production by stabilizing their acreages of commercial potatoes, wheat, tobacco, commercial vegetables, and corn for grain, are given financial assistance in meeting the expenses of their cooperation. The soil-building practices, in general, are similar to those included in the 1938 program.

### Vegetable Program Different

The vegetable program is entirely different this year. In 1938 the Northeast was the only region which had a vegetable program. This year commercial vegetables are included in the national program. It applies, however, only to farms in designated commercial vegetable areas. The acreage allotted to each farm is its usual acreage and does not represent a reduction. Allotments will be made to each farm in the vegetable areas which normally grows 3 or more acres of vegetables for market.

The more important changes in the 1939 program from that of 1938 include the dropping of the so-called general and total soil-depleting crop allotments which have been features of previous programs, and placing emphasis on the stabilization of acreage of the major soil-depleting crops in the region.

The changes in the 1939 program have been developed by state and county committeemen throughout the region, and represent an effort to simplify the program and at the same time make it more effective in accomplishing its purpose.

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### FARMERS OWN TWO-FIFTHS OF THEIR FARMS

The proportion of the farm land and buildings in the nation really owned by farm operators has fallen from nearly two-thirds to less than two-fifths in 55 years. The decline has been about 4 points each 10 years, in periods of prosperity as well as of depression. Continued at the same rate for another half century the decline would reduce the farm operators' share of farm real estate to one-sixth. The other five-sixths would belong to absentees.



In the Corn Belt this proportion is approaching rapidly. Farm operators in Illinois and Iowa in 1935 owned, above mortgage debt, only 28 and 24%, respectively, of the value of all farm land and buildings. In the wheat region the equity of farm operators in the farm real estate ranged from 20% in South Dakota to 35% in Montana. Farmers have been much more successful in retaining the ownership of land in the dairy belt.

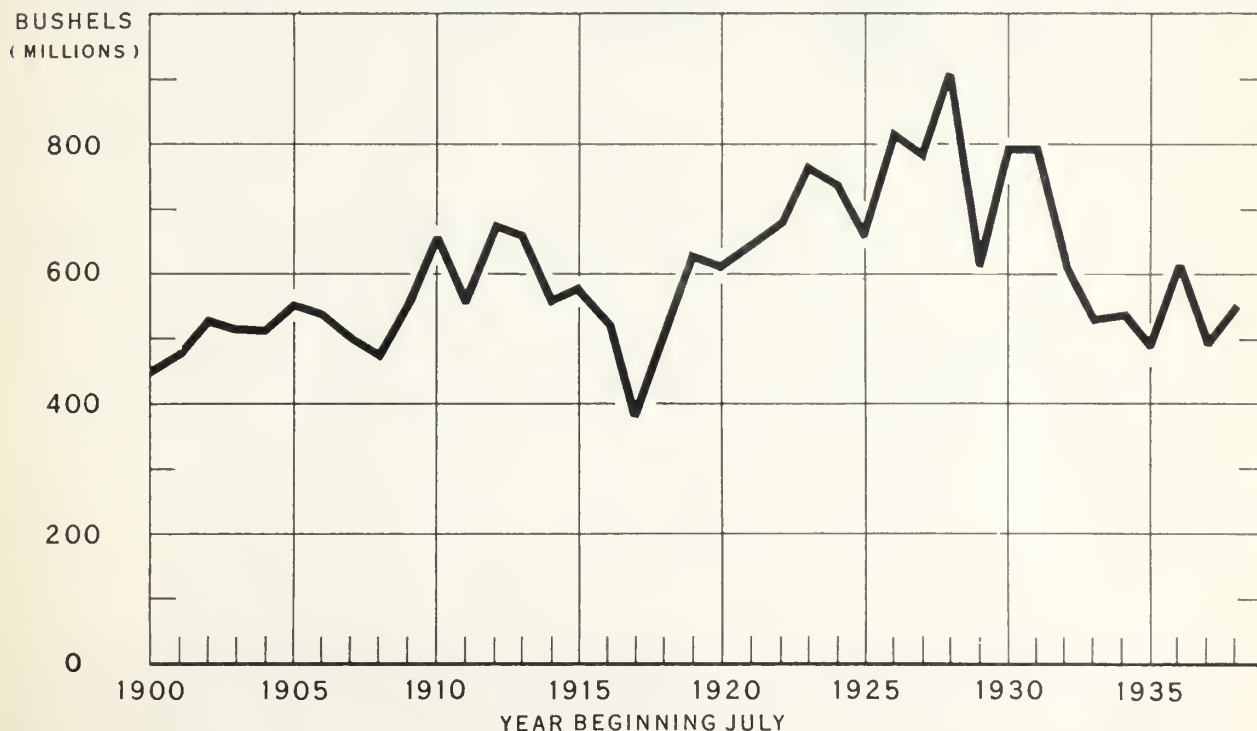
Declining farm ownership is an important cause of soil erosion and soil depletion. Tenants and farm operators with only small equities have small incentive to practice conservation and are often almost forced by rent or interest payments to plant the most productive crops, notably corn and cotton, which, being intertilled, facilitate erosion. (From: Report of the Secretary of Agriculture, 1938.)

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#### WORLD WHEAT EXPORT MARKET SMALLER

Wheat exporting countries must divide among them an import market absorbing only about 500 million bushels a year, compared with a high of over 900 million bushels in the year ending June 30, 1928. For the year ending June 30, 1938 the United States' net exports of domestic wheat amounted to about 100 million bushels as its share of the world market.

#### WHEAT, INCLUDING FLOUR: TOTAL WORLD SHIPMENTS, 1900-1938



## 1938 PAYMENTS ONE-HALF MADE

It is estimated that approximately 160,000 farmers in the Northeast Region cooperated in the 1938 program, an increase of about 7 percent over 1937. On February 3 approximately 63 percent of the estimated total applications had been received in Washington. Checks had gone out to practically one-half the number of farmers who are expected to receive payments to help defray the cost of conserving the soil last year.

The total payment to farmers this year in the region is estimated at \$13,000,000, which is 25 percent greater than the 1937 payments. The average payment per farm is estimated at \$81.05 compared with \$68.63 last year.

The following table gives the status of payments in each State.

State	Estimated 1938	Applications in Washington	Number Paid as	Average Payment	
	Applications	Feb. 3	of Feb. 3	1937	1938(Est.)
Maine	14,946	8,989	7,328	78.49	115.00
N. H.	5,325	3,434	2,535	34.38	50.93
Vermont	8,308	7,462	6,129	70.81	76.87
Mass.	7,780	6,066	5,384	49.42	68.86
R. I.	607	593	552	52.65	55.05
Conn.	4,720	4,135	3,464	68.66	97.93
New York	42,782	35,915	31,020	80.49	87.42
New Jersey	12,344	6,059	4,319	79.96	93.05
Pa.	64,693	29,690	19,744	59.53	70.21
Total Northeast	161,505	102,343	80,475	68.63	81.05

## NEWSY NOTES OF NORTHEAST INTEREST

James E. Walker and G. G. Minnich, members of the Pennsylvania State Committee, represented the Northeast Region at the national conference of wheat growers in Washington last month. After considering the problems confronting the wheat producers of the nation the conference recommended that the program as adopted for 1939 be carried out with a minimum of change.

Ben. F. Dibble, chairman of the Connecticut State Committee, led a discussion of the effects of the Agricultural Conservation Program on the dairy industry at the annual meeting of the Connecticut Milk Producers Association in Hartford on January 9, and at the Vermont state meeting of county committeemen in Burlington, January 17 and 18.